

Howard County Commission on Veterans and Military Families
Minutes
Thursday, 4 May 2017

Attendance: Howard Mooney, Wanda Riddle, Robert Lowell, Mike Blum, Janice Agazio, Craig Porterfield, Robert Gillette, Bob Moore, Lisa Terry

Guests: Barbara and Roger Nye, Larry Killen (Howard County Commander, American Legion), Chris Yates, Bob Berlett (American Legion Post 300), Miriam Bennett (MAP/Office of Aging)

Meeting was called to order at 1900 by Howard Mooney.

Special guest Miriam Bennett from Maryland Access Point provided a briefing on her office and announced a special Dental Screening Fair. The Fair will be held Saturday, 9 September, 1000 – 1500, North Laurel 50+ Center, 9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel 20723. First come, first served event that will provide dental services to vulnerable adults who otherwise would not have access to quality and affordable treatment.

OLD BUSINESS: A motion was asked by Howard to approve the March 2017 minutes. Minutes were read and motioned for approval by Janice, seconded by Craig. Motion passed. Future meeting dates are 1 June; July and August summer break; 7 September.

Lisa gave an after action report on the Veterans Resource Fair. She emailed all vendors and all who signed in. A survey was provided and feedback from all vendors and participants was positive. Only suggestion was the possibility for a larger venue. Discussion followed with the pros/cons. One future potential venue is Howard Community College, but scheduling needs to be done very early and parking difficulties would have to be overcome. Lisa will reserve the 50+ Center soonest so that we have it. Same timeframe next year. Thank you notes to be sent to guest speakers and other special attendees. Possible plaque for the JROTC unit due to their continued support over the past three years. Any suggestions for next year's Fair to be provided to Lisa.

Lisa briefed an idea from Tracy Atkins of Blue Star Families. She has suggested a Good Neighbor Recognition Award for an organization, business, or person who has demonstrated strong veteran support over the years. A sub-committee was formed with Lisa, Mike Blum and Craig Porterfield to explore the idea.

Bob Gillette briefed the current status of the Veterans Monument. The MOU that allows for the property next to Whole Foods on the Columbia Lake Front to be used as the site of the monument was signed. The site dedication is to take place 3 June 2017, 1100 at the Lake Front. The County Executive is confirmed to speak. Also, a donation from the Howard County Association of Realtors was presented to the Foundation at the meeting. Details for the ceremony are being worked. A flyer will be coming soon.

Bob Lowell updated the Commission on the Veterans Treatment Court Initiative. He and Wanda attended the Veterans Treatment Court in Frederick in April. It was very impressive and provided an opportunity to talk with both the Judge and others who were involved in the set-up for the court. Bob and Wanda then met with Kim Oldham, Deputy State's Attorney for Howard County and Brian Furlong of the same office. They are very supportive and are in the process now of determining how many veterans are defendants in the Howard County court system. Bob continues to talk with and explore the opportunities on the initiative. He also mentioned that Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County have veteran treatment courts established.

Lisa gave an update on couple of Memorial Day activities to include the Memorial Day Remembrance in Finksburg.

NEW BUSINESS: Howard asked for ideas on fund raising for the Monument. All were reminded that the Monument has a website with PayPal access, as well as, a place to send checks.

Wanda briefed on an upcoming 22-a-day push-up Challenge scheduled for 21 May, 1400 at Centennial High School Track and Field. It is being organized by the Howard County Chapter of the NAACP to raise awareness of Veteran suicides nationwide. Wanda will meet with the organizer next week to see what kind of support may be provided. Maryland's Commitment to Veterans has agreed to be there. Wanda will address the event on behalf of the Commission and the County Executive if he is unavailable to attend.

Commission members were reminded that the Howard County Fair has free veterans admission on opening day. The American Legion and other VSO's will have a table at the entrance. The Commission is welcome to place information there and man the table during the day. Parade at noon.

Lisa mentioned Maryland Commitment to Veterans is hosting conferences around the region.

Lisa passed out a straw man for the Howard County Veterans Day Teacher Resource Guide. All Commission members are requested to review and provide input back to Lisa.

Howard mentioned that this is the fifth anniversary of the Commission's stand-up. Three original members are still serving: Howard, Reg, Jonathan. There have been about 38 different people who have served on the Commission since its inception.

Meeting adjourned at 2015.

Submitted by Wanda Riddle